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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for increasing student motivation in order to increase reading performance. The targeted population included second, third, fourth, and tenth grade special education students. Lack of motivation in reading was documented through data revealed by pre and post surveys of students' attitudes and interests towards reading. Checklists were also used to document behavior. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that reading performance can be affected by the need for immediate gratification and lack of parental involvement for the targeted students. Students from low-income families lack appropriate books and materials in the home. A review of literature solution strategies resulted in the selection of several categories of intervention. The programs include the Read Aloud program, D.E.A.R. program, Reading Buddy program, and incentive programs. Post-intervention data indicated that motivation to read significantly increased in all levels. All targeted students read at least one book at the end of the interventions and continued to read more often compared to the amount that they read prior to the interventions. For all targeted students, the interventions appeared to be effective. (Contains 28 references, 2 tables, and 4 figures. Three appendixes contain: a teacher observation checklist; the student survey and evaluation form; and the teacher journal form.) (Author/PM)

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INCREASING STUDENT MOTIVATION TO IMPROVE READING PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for increasing student motivation in order to increase reading performance. The targeted population included second, third, fourth, and tenth grade special education students. Lack of motivation in reading was documented through data revealed by pre and post surveys of students' attitudes, and interests towards reading. Checklists were also used to document behavior.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that reading performance can be affected by the need for immediate gratification and lack of parental involvement for the targeted students. Students from low-income families lack appropriate books and materials in the home. Probable cause data also indicated that lack of parent involvement can influence students' reading performance.

A review of literature solution strategies resulted in the selection of several categories of intervention. The programs include the Read Aloud program, D.E.A.R program, Reading Buddy program, and incentive programs. The strategies for grades two, three, four and ten were to increase student motivation to read.

Comparisons of the results of the pretest and posttest intervention surveys were positive. Post-intervention data indicated that motivation to read significantly increased in all levels. All targeted students read at least one book at the end of the interventions and continued to read more often compared to the amount that they read prior to the interventions. For all targeted students, the interventions appeared to be effective.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students in the targeted schools exhibited low motivation that interfered with their reading performance. Evidence for existence of the problem included anecdotal records, teacher observations, and assessments that indicated the level of student academic performance in reading.

Local Context

School A

The school identified was composed of 1,100 students serving students in ninth through twelfth grade. Student population consisted of 87% Caucasian, 10% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 2% African American. The instructional expenditure per pupil was $6,483, and the operation expenditure per pupil was $11,572.

A total of 76% of the 89 professional personnel held a master's degree or beyond. All faculty taught in their areas of specialization. The administration included the superintendent, the principal, and an assistant superintendent. The Student Services Department included a director, five counselor/deans, a social

worker, and a student health supervisor. The average teacher's salary was about $66,000, and the average administrator's salary was about $97,000. The average teaching experience was 17 years.

The school year consisted of four quarters, each nine weeks long. The day was divided into seven 50-minute periods. The mean class size was 23 students, and the certified staff-to-student ratio was 13:1. Students took classes that fulfilled their minimum graduation requirements including mathematics, English, science, history, foreign language, and physical education/health courses. Students were allowed to choose elective courses in the areas of fine arts, technology, and applied arts. Approximately 10% of the school population was identified with a disability; however, 60% of those students were mainstreamed into regular school classes with resource help available for each student. The other 40% of the special education students were served in self-contained special education classes.

The school offered several extracurricular activities to the students. Student publications included newspaper, student creative writing, and yearbook. Sports offered were badminton, cross country, pupettes, baseball, basketball, football, soccer, golf, softball, track, volleyball, cheerleading, gymnastics, swimming, and wrestling. The school offered music, dance, and drama. Finally, the school offered numerous organizations and clubs including the Ecology Club, Forum Club, Guard Club, Ski Club, Math Club, and the Science Club.

The issues of concern included low scores in the areas of reading and writing on state assessments, behavior problems in the classrooms, and a lack of

parental involvement. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) dealt with these concerns in a very aggressive manner. A variety of motivational reading programs were introduced to the both regular and special education teachers. A new and improved student behavior plan was introduced and practiced throughout the school to help decrease the number of reported infractions, and teachers were asked to increase communication with parents through letters, phone calls, and e-mail.

School B

The school identified in the problem statement consisted of 6 third grades and 6 fourth grades. There were 225 students, with 20 full-time teachers. The teachers had an average teaching experience of 13.3 years. Thirty-four percent of the teachers had a master's degree and 64% had a bachelor's degree.

The ethnic composition of the school included 87% Caucasian students, 6% African American, 5% Hispanic, and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander. The school averaged 21 students per classroom and were heterogeneously assigned. The school had an attendance rate of 96.1% and a mobility rate of 11.2%. The low-income level was 16%, and the district spent approximately $7,200 per student.

The curriculum for this school included 6 hours and 15 minutes of instruction per day. Approximately 45 minutes per day were devoted to each core subject, which included mathematics, social studies, science, spelling, reading, and language arts. The allotted time for each subject area depended on the grade level of the students. A number of students were in a pullout program

to receive special services such as speech therapy, resource, ESL, social work, or gifted.

The extra programs offered at the elementary school included student of the month, pride club, scholar week, and book fun club. Extra assistance programs offered were after school study, homework help club, ISAT tutoring, and family math nights. Extracurricular activities consisted of chorus, newspaper, art club, peer mediation, and the leadership club.

The issues of concern included low performance scores on reading and writing, lack of parental involvement, and behavioral issues. The school improvement plan goals were focused on improvement in reading and writing performance through a variety of new programs introduced to the entire staff. Teachers were asked for their input on strategies to improve communication and involvement with parents in their child's education. Also, a new system was put into effect to try and mediate distracting behavior that had recently become a problem.

School C

School C's student population was approximately 900 students. The school offered pre-kindergarten training through sixth grade level education. The ethnic background consisted of primarily African Americans. The school's diverse student body was estimated to be 97% low-income. The operating expenditure allocated per pupil was about $7,000.

The faculty consisted of approximately 70 teachers. The teacher's average salary was $48,000, and the administrator's average salary was

approximately $84,000. The average teaching experience was 14 years. Throughout the building, 55% of teachers had earned a bachelor's degree and 45% of teachers had earned a master's degree.

The average class size was approximately 29 students. The time devoted to the teaching of core subjects depended on the grade level. Successful programs included Links To Literacy, Book It, Walking Reading 456, computer math labs, Science-On-The-Go, and the Black Star Mentoring Program. The school provided after school programs including the homework connection and tutoring service.

The uniqueness of the school was emphasized by its celebration of culture and diversity. The culture was celebrated and its importance was stressed in personal relationships and the school curriculum. There was a School-Wide Black Heritage Competition in which all grades participated.

The issues that concerned the administration were low scores on reading and writing assessments, unsafe neighborhoods, and a high student mobility rate. The administration decided to deal with these issues by providing new strategies and programs to enhance students' academic success and safety.

School D

The identified school in the problem statement enrolled about 1,000 students. The grades served in the building were kindergarten through eighth grade. The ethnic background of the school was composed of approximately 70% Caucasian, 20% African American, 7% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 1% Native American. Average expenditure per student was $5,065 per year. This figure

included all instructional expenses, support services, and payments to other governments.

There were approximately 80 faculty members in the building. The average experience of the teachers was 17 years. Within the building, 70% of the teachers had received a bachelor's degree, while 30% had received a master's degree or higher. The average salary for the faculty members was about $40,000.

The program for this school included a school day of 6 hours and 15 minutes. Classes consisted of approximately 25 students per class. The school day consisted of seven content areas: reading, mathematics, spelling, language arts, penmanship, science, and social studies. The time allotted for each subject area per week depended upon the grade level of the students. A number of students were in the pullout program to receive special services such as speech therapy, social work, ESL, resource, or gifted.

The school provided many extra-curricular activities for all grade levels. The elementary grades, kindergarten through sixth grade, had several clubs such as choir, student council, band, and yearbook committee. The junior high, seventh and eighth grades, offered many more options including a variety of sports and academic clubs such as mathletes and Spanish Club.

Improvements were emphasized at all grade levels. Administrators improved the curriculum areas of reading, mathematics, science, and social studies by implementing the new Illinois Learning Standards. The school expanded the instructional technology-training program for the staff. Other

improvements included a focus on language development, and remedial and gifted programs.

The Surrounding Communities

The population of the targeted schools in the Chicago Metropolitan area ranged from 15,000 to 26,000 people. A large percentage of the population within all the communities spoke another language in addition to English in their homes. Communities A and B were composed of approximately 92% Caucasian, 1% African American, 5% Hispanic, 1.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and .5% other. Community C was composed of 100% African American. Community D was composed of approximately 75% Caucasian, 15% African American, 8% Hispanic, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% Native American.

The median household income for communities A, C, and D was approximately $30,000. The median household income for community B exceeded $70,000. Three of the four communities had a large percentage of households below poverty level. In all communities, 50% or less of the family households included married couples.

The percentage of those persons who received high school diplomas or higher ranged from 60% to 87%. In all communities, the employment status for persons 16 or older was 75% or higher. All communities had a police station, a fire department, a library, a medical center/hospital, a city hall, and a community center. Each community also included numerous retail and commercial businesses, churches, parks, day care centers, and several means of transportation. The communities offered a wide range of activities for all ages

such as preschool, senior citizen centers, and programs initiated by park district or other organizations.

The concerns that the targeted communities faced included high mobility rate, low-income households, and language barriers. The percentage of mobility rate for all communities ranged from 12% to 30%. The percentage of limited English proficient students whose first language was not English and who were eligible for bilingual education ranged from 4.4% to 16%.

National Context of the Problem

The problem of students' lack of motivation that interfered with their reading performance has generated concern at the state and national levels (Otuya & Krupka, 1999). Teachers have recognized that motivation is at the heart of many problems educators face in teaching young children. They have also ranked motivating students as their primary and main concern (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, Mazzoni, & Anders, 1996).

Teachers spend a great amount of time throughout the school day reviewing remedial reading skills to improve students' reading performance. Students who struggle with reading, unless helped, tend to have trouble reaching their academic goals in school.

Student motivation has to do with the desire to want to participate in the process of learning. There are two types of student motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsically motivated students read for their own enjoyment and satisfaction. These students have feelings of accomplishment. Lepper (as cited in Student Motivation to Learn, 1994) suggested using stickers, awards, and

good grades as a means of positive reinforcement for those students who are extrinsically motivated to perform. Many teachers use rewards as extrinsic motivators in order to get their students to read.

Students' lack of motivation to read is a very serious concern not only for the child, but also for teachers, parents, and communities. According to Lyons (1997), lack of motivation to read may get in the way of a child's chances of leading a fulfilling and productive life. Parents worry that their children will not become good readers due to a lack of motivation. Society fears that there will be a decline in competent community employers as a result of low motivation as well.

Motivating students to read is a serious concern, and should receive the highest priority in schools. Parents and teachers can do this by devoting themselves fully to motivating students to read. Without the ability to read, students may be denied the opportunity to expand their minds and to experience new ideas. In addition, they are missing one of life's most pleasurable activities (A Guide to Reading, 2000).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document students' motivation to read, the teachers used an observation checklist over a 13-week period (Appendix A). Student surveys and self-evaluation forms about reading motivation were completed at the beginning and at the end of the 13-week study (Appendix B). Teacher conferences were used to evaluate students' progress on the issue of reading motivation.

Approximately 80 students from 4 different sites including tenth grade special education students' reading and writing, and second, third, and fourth grade students' reading were involved in this research project. A reading motivation survey was administered to the students at each site (see Table 1). In addition to the survey, results of the teacher observation checklist, shown in Figures 1 and 2, identified students' attitudes and behaviors while reading. A teacher journal form (Appendix C) was used to record teacher observations during the research project.

Table 1

Percent of Positive Responses to the Student Survey of Reading Attitudes

	GRADES			
SURVEY ITEMS	10th	4th	2nd	3rd
Enjoy going to the library	20	35	86	86
Use the public library frequently	40	35	40	52
Read a book in last 3 months	30	60	73	71
Read in free time	30	30	57	19
Always have books to read	70	75	50	57

Overall this survey shows a notable discrepancy in students' responses among the sites represented. For example, 86% of the students from both the second and third grade classes responded that they enjoyed going to the library, while only 20% of the tenth grade students and 35% of the fourth grade students indicated that they enjoyed going to the library. Furthermore, the results from the survey showed a discrepancy in that only 30% of the students from the tenth grade site read a book in the last three months compared to a much higher percentage of students from the second, third, and fourth grade classes.

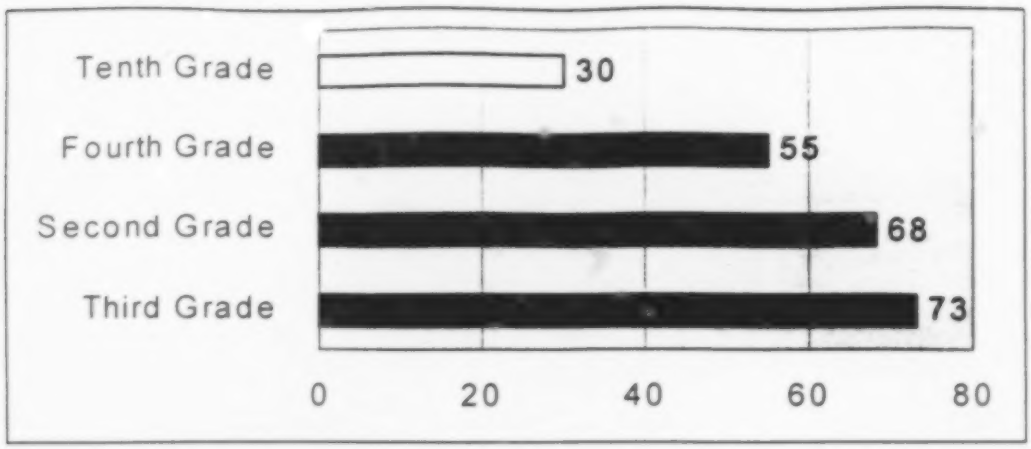

Figure 1. Percentage of students who displayed a positive attitude while reading based on an observation checklist.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of students who displayed a positive attitude while reading, based on teacher observation. There is a notable difference between the third grade class and the tenth grade class. While 73% of the students from the third grade class displayed a positive attitude while reading, only 30% of the students from the tenth grade class displayed a positive attitude while reading.

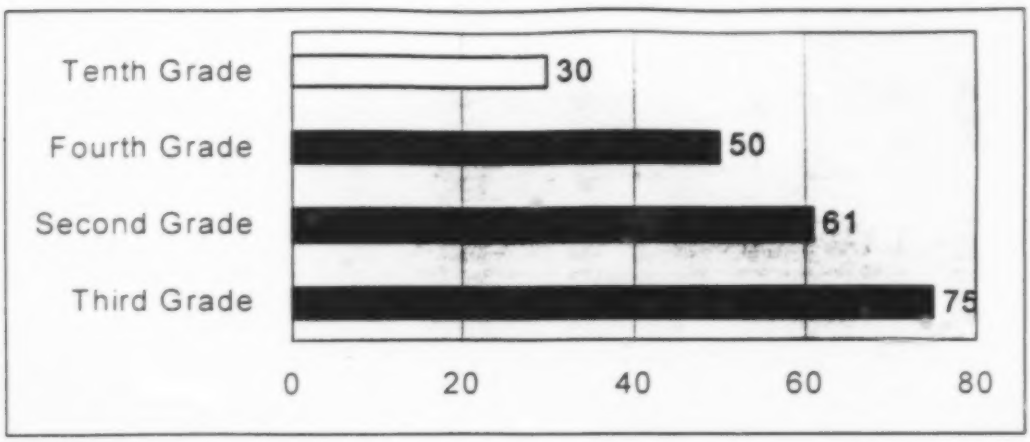

Figure 2. Percentage of students who are on-task while reading based on an observation checklist.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of students who displayed on-task behavior while reading, based on teacher observation. A discrepancy was identified between the three elementary classes and the tenth grade class. At least 50% of the students from second, third, and fourth grade displayed on-task behaviors while reading versus 30% of the students from the tenth grade class.

Probable Causes

The researchers observed that some students coming from low-income families often had a difficult time being motivated to read. This becomes a factor when families cannot afford to buy appropriate reading material for their children, or for whom reading material in the home may be a low-priority. Children sometimes have to feed themselves, baby-sit for younger siblings, worry about safety, or work outside jobs to provide for their family. Many children have numerous household responsibilities and may have little time to dedicate to reading. Furthermore, children may not be provided with a quiet area to read at home as a result of over-crowding or limited space.

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Another factor that may affect students' motivation to read is the increase in their need for immediate gratification. The researchers have found it difficult to maintain students' attention during academic lessons. For example, instructional objectives may need to be taught in smaller increments of time in order to keep students on task. Children may replace reading with activities such as television, video games, surfing the Internet, or other fast-paced, immediately gratifying, activities.

Another factor affecting students' motivation to read may be the lack of positive role models in their lives. Parents and teachers have the most effect on students. If parents are not reading in the home, children may not see reading as a worthwhile activity. Furthermore, if children are allowed to choose television and video games as free time activities, they may be less likely to pick up a book to read during their leisure time. Parents should read to their children on a daily basis and encourage them to read independently.

Teachers are very important in the process of motivating children to read. Administrators place a lot of pressure on educators to fulfill curriculum deadlines and meet standardized test requirements. Teachers need time to model reading and allow students to read independently with appropriate, self-selected material. Many students would benefit if teachers used a more holistic, child-centered, approach to reading.

Researchers suggest several underlying causes for low motivation to read by students. According to Ivey (2000), access to books may make an enormous difference in a child's early reading development. Children who come from low-income families often have fewer books available to them in homes, compared to children attending schools in neighborhoods with higher-income families. As a

result, many students leave school with a narrow range of experiences with reading.

Arthur and Burch (1993) stated that teachers must create motivation for students within their classrooms to compensate for the students' lack of interest in reading. Outside interests include watching television or movies, or playing computer games. Teachers face the challenge of teaching both competent and incompetent readers who refuse to read because of their indifferent attitudes toward reading.

One of the factors affecting student motivation may be the lack of support from parents towards teachers and schools. Rimm (1997) stated that lack of parental support for teachers in schools may be a cause of student underachievement. A lack of respect for education by parents may interfere with teachers' power to teach. When parents and teachers are not in agreement with the expectations for the children, children may develop patterns of escape and avoidance when faced with reading choices.

Gambrell (1996) studied incompetent readers' lack of motivation to read. He found incompetent readers tend to be unmotivated to read due to the simple fact that they lack reading skills. Researchers suggest that students who believe they are competent readers are more likely to be successful than those who do not hold those beliefs. Highly motivated readers are self-determined and can generate their own reading opportunities. Low motivation to read is related to low self-concept and holds little value for reading, while highly motivated students tend to have positive self-concept and view reading as a high priority.

Lepper (as cited in Palmer, Codling, & Gambrell 1994) indicated that poor attitudes might be another cause of students' lack of motivation to read. As

children grow older, it seems as if their desire to read begins to diminish. Learning may become associated with misery instead of enlightenment. Some students leave school before graduation and many others are physically present, but mentally absent, in the classroom. Some students with poor attitudes towards school and learning are not taking responsibility for their lack of learning. As a result, some students refuse to accept personal responsibility and may not experience the pleasures of learning.

There are many factors that contribute to low motivation to read. The situations at home and in school heavily affect a child's desire to read. Issues such as low-income households, lack of positive role models, a need for immediate gratification, poor attitudes, and reading incompetence often play significant roles in a child's self-motivation to read. It is crucial for parents, teachers, and school leaders to devote themselves to understanding, maintaining, and encouraging students' interest in literature and reading.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

The lack of motivation to read is an issue that needs to be addressed by teachers, parents, and students. There are many factors that contribute to students' lack of motivation, including low socio-economic status, a lack of positive role models, and a need for immediate gratification. In low-income households students may have limited resources, limited family involvement, or experience extraneous factors that may interfere with their educational achievement. Jones (1998) stated that approximately half of a child's school achievement is a product of the child's home background.

Educators have attempted a variety of solutions. Some effective solutions that have been initiated by educators include Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), music integration, the Read-Aloud program, and the Read-a-Book-in-an-Hour program. Educators have struggled with the issue of reading motivation in their own classrooms and have reported on their individual situations and attempted solutions.

Motivation can be defined as students' desire to participate willingly in the process of learning. It also concerns goals that pertain to their involvement or lack of involvement in academic activities. The sources of student motivation may differ according to each situation (Lepper, as cited in Palmer, Codling, & Gambrell, 1994). "Teachers have long recognized that motivation is at the heart of many of the pervasive problems we face in educating today's children" (Gambrell, 1996, p. 17).

Extrinsic motivation is one way to encourage students to do what teachers, parents, or others want them to do. Extrinsic motivation is a tactic that is used by teachers in which rewards or punishments are implemented. Brooks et al. found that rewards are most effective when they are tied to the task accomplished or students may be avoiding punishments when they participate in an activity (as cited in Strategies for Increasing Motivation, 2000). Some examples of positive reinforcement include teacher praise, stickers, and grades. Some examples of negative reinforcement include loss of classroom privileges or notes sent home.

Intrinsic motivation is another way of motivating students. Intrinsic motivation stems from an individual's own interest. The student completes the activity because the student enjoys the feelings that the activity produces. There are feelings of accomplishment. Most evidence indicates that intrinsic motivation will lead to a more long-term involvement in activities such as reading. Both kinds of motivation may increase children's' motivation to read. Teachers should emphasize intrinsic over extrinsic motivation. By doing this, teachers elicit

internal motivation by focusing on problem solving, creating intellectual curiosity, and exploring student's self-understanding (McCann, Metsala, & Wigfield, 1996).

The Read-Aloud program is used to help increase motivation in the classroom. In one particular middle school, a teacher reported that there was a decreasing importance of reading due to the fact that some parents were not giving adequate support to teachers. Therefore, teachers had to change the attitudes students held toward reading. Researchers stated that there was a decline in positive attitudes towards reading by the time the students entered sixth grade. One of the reasons for the reported decline was that students were given more free time options to choose over reading. Futhermore, McKenna et al. found that students actually thought of reading as just another chore (as cited in Stein & Wolff, 2000).

Researchers from the Institute of Academic Excellence suggested that teachers should make time to read aloud to their students, regardless of their ages. Furthermore, researchers reported that reading aloud to students may be one of the best ways to motivate students to read more and to choose more appropriate books. Teachers can choose to either read a few chapters from a variety of books, or read an entire book with suggestions of other books written by the same author. Students will be more inclined to value books when they see adults and mentors reading (Great Ways to Motivate Students to Read, 1997).

Read-Aloud is a program in which the teacher simply reads aloud to the students while modeling the pleasures of reading. The teacher fosters the love of literature by orally reading in front of the students. The facial expressions,

volume, and changes in inflection should be modeled correctly during Read-Aloud time. Educators can motivate the students to choose reading time by using the Read-Aloud program. The Read-Aloud program exposes the students to a variety of reading experiences, creates listeners who find enjoyment in reading, and ultimately results in motivating students to want to read. Adults need to read aloud to children throughout all the grades and not just when the children are unable to read on their own. Reading aloud to children is the single, most essential activity for creating the knowledge needed for the eventual success in reading (Calkins, 2000)

Another approach to the Read-Aloud program is engaging the children through informal class discussions. This particular approach is called interactive read-aloud. Interactive Read-Aloud encourages the children to verbally interact with the text, peers, and teacher. This approach to reading aloud engages the students as they explore and develop meaning through the reading process (Barrentine, 1996). By using the interactive Read-Aloud approach, the teacher can conclude the lesson with in-depth class discussion about the story. These after-reading discussions promote opportunities for the children to connect the story to their personal lives. It also gives an opportunity for teachers to explore the connections that the students have made (Eeds & Peterson, 1991).

The Read-a-Book in an Hour program is used to motivate students to read. This program allows the students to share the responsibility of reading an entire book with their classmates while taking ownership for their part in the reading assignment. The reading can be divided in two ways. The teacher can

divide the total number of pages by the number of students in the class, or the teacher can divide the number of pages or chapters by half the number of students. Then, the teacher assigns the pages so that at least two students are reading the new material. Finally, students share what they have read and reflect on the literature during a chat session (Childrey, as cited in Stein & Wolff, 2000).

An effective voluntary reading program, called Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), has been an outstanding approach to practicing reading for over 30 years (Lee-Daniels & Murray, 2000). DEAR is a flexible program that supports the importance of reading regardless of the ability level or the age of the students. In DEAR, students are able to select materials appropriate to their reading interests or levels. This process accommodates students with special needs. The value of regular reading practice by children is vital in developing their skills. Therefore, frequent opportunities to read voluntarily should result in increased reading performance (Reven & Greathouse, 1999).

Lee-Daniels uses DEAR in her classroom in order to increase student motivation to read. She allows her students to read up to 30 minutes a day and does not permit any interruptions. Readers are encouraged to choose their reading materials based on interest, and they may select comic books, magazines, picture books, newspaper articles, or novels. Lee-Daniels found that although the DEAR program was working, some students still remained unmotivated to participate; therefore, she added an additional element to her program where students participated in either a conference with the teacher or in

literature discussions with peers. Research showed that DEAR worked best when books were shared among children. Reading and talking about texts of choice allows for students to learn reading skills together. This also increases intrinsic motivation. Often when students choose books in which they are interested, the readers frequently surpassed their independent levels and instructional levels (Johns, 1996). The best way to improve reading skills is to increase reading time. Students who read frequently tend to read fluently, learn vocabulary, and acquire knowledge about the world.

Music can also be used to motivate children to read. An elementary teacher noticed children were unmotivated to read during DEAR time. She then started playing background music during daily DEAR time and felt that her students' attitudes towards reading dramatically improved. Combining music with literature enhances readers' responses (Rosenblatt, as cited in Towell, 1999). When students experience reading silently while simultaneously listening to music, they become intrigued by the text involvement and are motivated to read (Towell, 1999).

There are many strategies that are used in motivating students to read by using music with literature. Some include reading picture books made from songs, using music to set the mood for selected stories, using instruments or sound effects during reading, or combining poetry with music. Including music in a reading curriculum can be a magical experience when introducing students to different literature. Music can be especially beneficial for those children who have difficulty learning through traditional methods (Towell, 1999).

There are other general strategies that have been conducted by educators. These strategies include using non-threatening questions about the reading they have done, using consequences that build responsibility, and having high expectations for students that will develop their self-esteem.

It is important when asking students about what they have read to state the questions in a positive manner. Some students may become discouraged when they cannot recall a specific detail of a story. Questions should be open-ended to encourage students to think critically. This strategy helps students feel less threatened and more motivated to read (Davis, 1993).

Another strategy is building responsibility by using consequences. Literacy tasks can be classified as open or closed. Open and closed tasks have different consequences for students. In open tasks, students are in control. There is no "one correct" answer, or a specific procedure to follow. Open tasks require students to set the goals, choose and organize the information, select the strategies, and assess their final results. Open-ended tasks are more likely to provide challenges, student control over learning, genuine choices, and opportunities for students to work together.

Closed tasks are those in which either the product, the process, or both, are specified. In closed tasks, there is only one correct answer. For example, in many worksheet activities, students are directed to fill in the blank with the correct word. Closed tasks provide students with fewer activities to control their learning. These activities do not permit students to make their own choices and decisions . Unfortunately, children may be forced to compare themselves to

other students. Teachers need to correctly model oral reading skills in order to provide the students with some effective reading strategies. The students will then be able to take ownership, complete challenging tasks, and be responsible for their own learning. These activities support student motivation through effective consequences and foster students' effort and determination. Open-ended tasks have a more powerful effect on students' motivation to read (Turner & Paris, 1995).

Children need to be given a sense of security and a high degree of confidence in order to be successful in school. Students need to know that their teachers have faith in their abilities and that they are capable of being successful. Children with confidence will be more eager to try and learn new things. A sense of security will help the student deal with making mistakes, which may increase their sense of self-worth (Erwin, 1979).

There are also other programs that are helpful in motivating children to read. The Accelerated Reader (AR) program and the Reading Buddy program are two strategies used frequently by educators. The Accelerated Reader program is a computer program that motivates children to read in the same way that games motivate children to play. For example, points are given based on the length, quality, and difficulty level of the books that are read. Students take computer-generated tests and receive their scores immediately. The comprehension questions and testing methods are fair. The Accelerated Reader program can have a positive effect on students' self-esteem and reading motivation. Classroom teachers have found that their students were not only

doing better in reading, but their attendance was better, and they experienced success in other subject areas. In addition, teachers reported a growth of up to two years in reading achievement in one year. The AR students showed an improvement in their reading scores as well as their reading attitudes with the addition of the AR program (Peak & Dewalt, 1994).

The Reading Buddy program is a reading program used by many teachers to motivate their students to read. In this program, the teacher puts students in groups of two in order to read selected literature together. Children may also be partnered with students from different grade levels. The children chose a variety of ways to read together such as taking turns, echo reading, and silent reading. The children then share their thoughts and reflect on what they have read. Students should be encouraged to discuss the characters, events, settings, and conflicts from the literature they have read. In the case where cross-aged pairings are used, the two students are given a chance to meet and discuss books. The younger children look forward to being with the older students, and the older students are the more experienced members of the group (Menon & Mirabito, 1999). Children have a higher interest level when books are shared among peers. Social interaction can be an important factor in literacy development (Guthrie, 1993).

Solution Strategy

The teachers of the research project implemented a schedule of independent and partnered reading. One strategy included teachers reading aloud to the students on a daily basis. Students were also allowed to select their

own reading material and to reflect upon what they read. In order to incorporate the parents in this process of motivation, certain activities were integrated in the home. A daily reading log traveled from school to home and family reading activities at home were suggested. For those students who benefited from extrinsic motivation, an incentive program was established in the classroom.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of using the DEAR program, Read Aloud program, and Reading Buddy program directed by the research team during the period from September 2001 through December 2001, the targeted students will increase their motivation to read independently as measured by teacher observation, student surveys, and student reflections.

1.) The Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) program will be implemented.

2.) Teachers will develop and guide the students in the Reading Buddies program.

3.) Teachers will design and provide an incentive program to reward students for reading achievement.

4.) A list of reading activities will be suggested for parents/guardians to be practiced at home.

5.) Teachers will participate in the Read-Aloud program daily.

6.) Students will document their independent reading on a daily basis. This log will be used in school and at home.

Action Plan

In order to accomplish these outcomes, a week by week plan is presented in an outline form. The schedule covers the week of September 17, 2001 as week one and ends on December 7, 2001 with week thirteen. The action plan follows:

Week 1: -A pre-test in the form of a survey as well as a self-evaluation will be distributed to the students.

-After the information has been collected the teacher will have a conference with each student concerning the purpose of reading.

-A letter will be sent to the parents with a list of suggested reading activities that can be completed at home.

-Begin the Read Aloud program by students selecting the literature.

Week 2: -The teacher will set up the reading buddies program allowing for students to read with their selected partners for 30 minutes, once a week.

-The teacher will also begin the DEAR program in which the students are allowed to read self-chosen literature for 30 minutes a day independently.

-Continue with the Read Aloud program for the entire duration of the project.

Week 3: -Students were taught how to record information in a reading log and in their journals. Then a model was posted in the room reminding the children the proper way to record information in their reading log.

-Teacher used a checklist in order to document student progress.

-An incentive program was introduced to the students.

Week 4: -Students participated in book chats with others once a week. This is where students discuss the books they read and reflect on their reading.

Week 5-12: -Conference with each student to discuss his or her log and reading progress.

-Continue the DEAR program, reading buddies, book chats, logs, journals, read aloud, and incentive program.

Week 13: -Children completed a post-test survey and a PMI activity.

-Students will participate in a book trade activity and be rewarded for their participation.

Assessment Plan

In order to determine the effects of the interventions, teachers will observe students' reading by using checklists, evaluation tests, and journal rubrics. This information will be obtained from anecdotal records. In order to evaluate the students' attitude and motivational levels, teachers will assess the students' journals, evaluate logs weekly, and use student surveys. These strategies will provide insight into each student's individual progress.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase students' motivation to read with emphasis on teacher modeling, building student responsibility, and increasing the students' value of reading. In order to improve and accomplish this objective, the targeted second, third, fourth, and special education class participated in the following strategies: teacher modeling, peer reading, book chats, independent reading followed by journals, incentive programs, and weekly student/teacher interviews.

The first strategy was to incorporate the Read-Aloud program in which the teacher modeled the skill and fostered the pleasures of reading. Each teacher began the program during the first week of the research project. Students were allowed to help select the literature used during Read-Aloud. Each researcher chose to use the Read-Aloud program more frequently than originally planned due to the students' positive responses to this particular strategy. Time spent during teacher modeling ranged from 15 minutes to 30

minutes a day. Teachers introduced good reading skills as well as listening skills.

The next strategy was to allow time each day for students to read independently. This was called the D.E.A.R. program. The original plan called for the targeted second, third, fourth, and special education class to implement D.E.A.R. into their schedule for 30 minutes per day. However, the special education class was only able to implement 90 minutes of D.E.A.R. time a week since the teacher was only given 50 minutes a day for the reading and writing workshop. Furthermore, the teacher made the decision to decrease D.E.A.R. time given the specific needs of the students in that particular special education class.

Students in all four classes were asked to record their reading times and materials in a personal log. In addition to the logs, students kept individual journals in which they recorded summaries, reflections, and predictions of their reading from day to day. The second, third, and fourth grade teachers had each student keep their reading logs, journals, and selected literature in a labeled folder. The special education teacher had the students keep a portfolio, which included all reading materials. The researchers read over logs and journals on a weekly basis in order to keep track of student progress and as a means of contributing to student-teacher conferences.

During the second week, teachers paired their students into peer reading buddies according to student's ability levels. Once a week, this strategy was used to build students' motivation to read through informal time spent with a peer

in a social situation. The second and fourth grade students paired within their own classroom. The third grade paired with a lower grade level. The special education class participated in group reading due to the limited number of students in the class, as well as the high rate of absences observed by the teacher.

Book chats followed D.E.A.R. time once a week. This strategy allowed time for students to explore different perspectives on reading, as well as develop social interaction. The students were also able to become familiar with other types of literature and genres.

In addition, the original plan for the action research project called for the researchers to develop their own incentive program to use with their targeted classes. The researchers used a unique program in order to suit the needs of their students spent reading independently. The targeted second grade used Book It. Book It is a program where the students read books, reflect on them through book reports, chart their progress, and eventually earn pizza coupons as a reward. The third grade used the Accelerated Reader program, which allowed students to earn points based on books they have read and quizzes they have taken. This is a computerized program where students were rewarded when certain goals were individually reached. In addition, the fourth grade used a similar program called the Scholastic Reader program. The only difference between these two programs was the book selection. The incentive program used in the special education class was tied into their class grade. A certain

percentage of their grade was based upon the number of novels read during the research time.

The final intervention implemented was student-teacher conferences. This allowed teachers to intervene with students' independent reading as well as to provide feedback on individual student progress. The original plan called for individual conferences with every student. The targeted third and fourth grade selected random students due to a lack of time in a school day. In contrast, the special education class was able to conference with every child more frequently due to a smaller classroom population. The second grade also had a conference with every student on a weekly basis.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

The pretest and posttest surveys were completed by 80 elementary and special education students who were then monitored by the teachers during the 13-week research project. The survey consisted of five areas in which students were asked to reflect about their reading experiences. A summary of the results is presented in Table 2. Most student responses in December were very different in comparison to how they responded in September. For example, in December the students from the tenth grade and fourth grade showed an enormous increase in their positive responses about going to the library. The fourth grade students showed a 25% increase, and the tenth grade students made a drastic increase of 40% in their student responses. Survey item two asked the students whether or not they used the public library frequently. The

results from the posttest survey either stayed the same or showed a slight increase.

Most impressively, all of the targeted students from all four sites answered that they always had a book to read. The results indicated that there was a 25% to 50% increase in the number of students reporting that they always had a book to read. Furthermore, the survey also asked the students if they had a read a book from cover to cover in the last three months. Again all of the students from all four sites answered that they had read a book from cover to cover in the last three months. The results indicated a 27% to 70% increase in the percentages from September to December in this particular area. Finally, the results from the survey question, "Do you read in your free time?" the tenth grade students showed a 30% increase, the fourth grade students showed a 45%, the second grade students displayed a 28% increase, and the third grade showed a 57% increase.

Table 2

Percent of Responses to the Pretest and Posttest Survey of Reading Attitudes

Survey Items	10th		4th		3rd		2nd	
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Enjoy Library	20	60	35	60	86	95	86	94
Use Library	40	50	35	35	52	54	40	40
Read a Book	30	100	60	100	71	100	73	100
Freely Read	30	60	30	75	19	76	57	85
Have a Book	71	100	75	100	57	100	50	100

In order to assess students' attitude and on-task behaviors while reading, teachers completed a teacher observation checklist at the beginning and at the end of the 13-week research period. Teachers also kept an informal checklist to use during the 13 weeks in order to observe positive and negative behavior while reading. The results indicated an increase in both areas. The first item of the teacher observation checklist showed an increase in students' positive attitude while reading. Some of the behaviors used as criteria were smiling faces, good posture, and an overall look of enthusiasm while reading. In September, only 30% of the tenth grade students displayed a noticeable positive attitude while reading. However, in December, the teacher found that 70% of those same students were displaying a more positive attitude while reading. The fourth grade students showed a 35% increase, the second grade students showed a 32% increase, and third grade showed a 27% increase in the number of students displaying a positive attitude while reading.

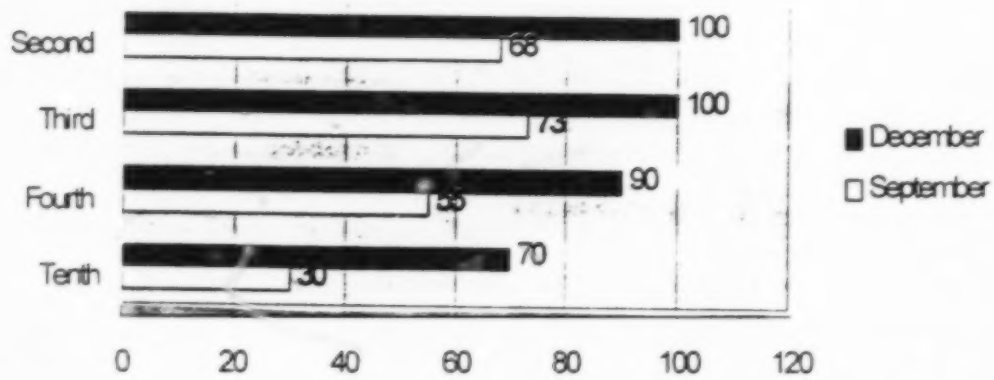

Figure 3. Percentage of students who displayed a positive attitude while reading.

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The second behavior that the researchers observed was students' on-task behavior while reading. On-task behavior was defined as students participating in active reading. For example, a student displaying on-task behavior would be reading words from left to right, turning pages, and avoiding distractions in the classroom. The results from the checklist showed an increase in the number of students displaying on-task behaviors while reading. In December, 90% of the tenth grade students compared to 30% of the same students in September displayed on-task behaviors while reading. Fourth graders showed a 40% increase, third graders displayed a 23% increase, and second graders showed a 29% increase in the number of students displaying on-task behaviors while reading.

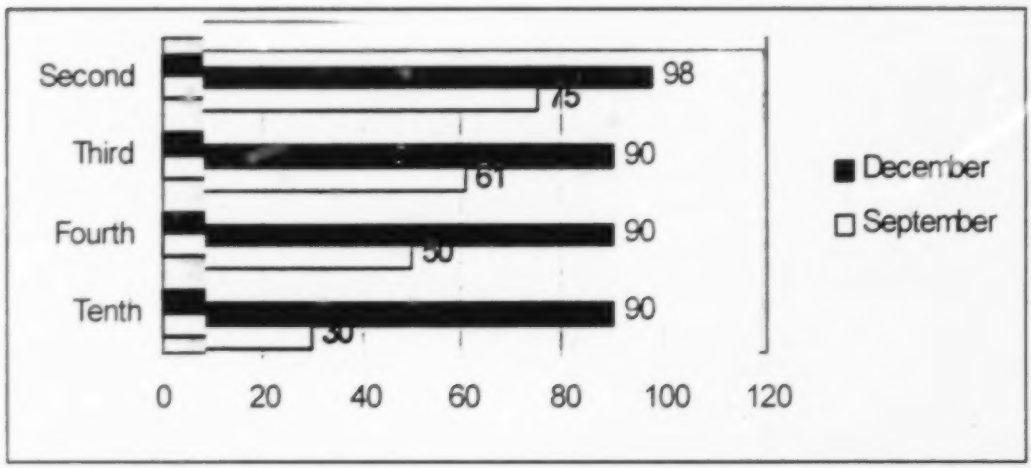

Figure 4. Percentage of students who were on task while reading.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on student motivation to read, the students showed an improvement in reading performance. The reading skills learned appeared to have had a positive impact on students' attitudes towards reading. Most importantly, the amount of teacher modeling and energy devoted towards reading increased the students' desire to read. Students read independently, and their academic engagement improved. The plan of achievement used in goal incentive programs added positive pressure that may have affected their increased academic achievement.

Overall, the chosen interventions worked well. The researchers found that in all grade levels the Read-Aloud program was the most successful. The students took ownership by selecting literature that they were interested in. In all targeted classes, the students were choosing Read-Aloud time in place of free time activities. At first, the tenth grade students felt that this particular activity was too elementary for them, but they realized that this was still an effective and pleasurable experience. Therefore, one of the strengths of the intervention was that the tenth grade students could be just as actively involved as the elementary students.

The D.E.A.R. program was another effective intervention that was implemented. The researchers concluded that the majority of the students used their time wisely and anticipated this independent silent reading time each day. The students selected more challenging literature as the research project progressed. However, In some cases there were students who were unaware of

how to choose appropriate and interesting books that would hold their attention. Therefore, those particular students became disenchanted with D.E.A.R. time. Some students also needed more guidance during D.E.A.R. time. The use of the journals and logs used during D.E.A.R. time was an effective tool for keeping running records of their reading progress.

Reading Buddies was another beneficial intervention that was applied. Overall the success of this program was evident in the elementary classes. Through teacher observation, the researchers found that the children were enthusiastic and looked forward to working with their reading buddies each week. They continued to support and encourage each other. Book chats were coupled with the Reading Buddy program. The elementary children especially enjoyed the conversations with peers, and teachers found that the students' discussions academically improved throughout the weeks. On the other hand, the students from the special education class had a difficult time working together during this program. Some students were overly social, while others resented having to work with someone in a reading and discussion situation.

During the research project, the teachers implemented individual incentive programs that they felt would be most effective in their classrooms. All of the researchers concluded that the selected incentive programs were effective in motivating their students to continue to read independently. The students from the elementary classes were rewarded extrinsically which was most effective for them, while the tenth grade students were rewarded intrinsically. Regardless, both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards motivated the students to read on their own.

After evaluating the interventions the researchers would make some recommendations for the future. All researchers concluded that each intervention was successful; however, additional time would have been beneficial in order to accomplish all interventions. Another recommendation by the researchers would be to take the time in the beginning to assist the students in discovering their interests more authentically. Therefore, the selection of literature chosen by each student would have been less difficult. Interest surveys would be an ideal tool to use in order to guide the students in their literature selections.

Teacher conferences and observations were also ideal in assisting and promoting the individual needs of each student on a more personal level. This caused each student to be more at ease and receptive to suggestions made by the teacher. Although the Reading Buddy program was successfully utilized for the elementary classes, the special education students were more comfortable with whole group reading rather than paired reading. This gave the students a better opportunity to succeed during this particular intervention.

The researchers will continue to utilize the interventions throughout the school year. This study has had an overall positive impact on students' motivation, self-esteem, and reading performance. In addition the interventions helped the teachers gain knowledge and an overall awareness of the positive impact these interventions made. Due to the positive impact of the interventions, all researchers will continue interventions in upcoming years.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Teacher Observation Checklist

Class Reading Observations

	On task behavior while reading	Positive attitude while reading.	Able to read with fluency	Understands what is read	Chooses books appropriately to ability level	Knows what an author does	Knows what an illustrator does	Can find a specific page number	Reads/moves finger from left to right	Reads/moves finger from top to bottom	Reads or mock reads	Is able to read high frequency words	Can point to a specific word	Enjoys looking at books	Listens during story time

Appendix B
Student Reading Survey and Evaluation Form

Student Reading Self-Evaluation

	Yes	No
1. Do you enjoy reading?		
2. Is reading easy for you?		
3. Do you have a library card?		
4. Do you use the public library?		
5. Do you use your public library?		
6. Do you think books are important?		
7. Have you read an entire book in the last three months?		
8. Is there a time of day you enjoy reading?		
9. Do you know how to use the Dewey Decimal System?		
10. Would you be interested in learning about careers in writing?		
11. Have you ever met an author?		
12. Have you ever seen a movie that was based on a book?		
13. Do you remember what you have read?		
14. Have you ever discussed a book with another person?		
15. Have you ever read a book to someone younger?		
16. Do you enjoy being read to?		
17. Do you always have a book to read?		
18. Do you have a favorite author?		
19. Do you think you have become a better since last year?		
20. Do you read newspapers and weekly/monthly magazines?		

Student Survey

Rate the following statements as *Yes, No,* or *Sometimes.*

1. You feel happy when you're reading.

   Yes No Sometimes

2. You don't read much in the classroom.

   Yes No Sometimes

3. When you have free time at school, you usually read a book.

   Yes No Sometimes

4. You would rather look at the pictures in a book than read the book.

   Yes No Sometimes

5. You would rather play after school than read.

   Yes No Sometimes

6. You think reading is work.

   Yes No Sometimes

7. You enjoy going to the library.

   Yes No Sometimes

8. You wish you had a library full of books at home.

   Yes No Sometimes

Appendix C
Teacher Journal Form

Actions Taken:

Reflection:

PLUSES (+)	MINUSES (-)	INTERESTING (?)